

The Snow Country Hunting Life of the Northern Nobleman and the Raptor Wife 北欧貴族と猛禽妻の雪国狩 り暮らし

Side Story

Written by Emoto Mashimesa (江本マシメサ)

Illustrator by Akaneko (あかねこ)

Credits



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Translated by [Kudarajin](#)

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Chapter 49 - Teoporon's Activity Report

The limitless horizons of the plains cannot be split from our life.

The rich green is practically non-existent. Our source of food are the huge bison roving the lands. We ride on horses and chase them down the cliffs to hunt them.

We pray to the ancient spirits for peace every day. In our village, we live in tents made from wood and bison hides.

We led a nomadic life, protecting our sheep and moving once the food at a land was depleted.

When we encountered other tribes on the move, we sometimes fought with our wealth, the sheep or the horses on the line.

One village has about twenty families. There, the chieftain, a 'great king' rules over the place.

A 'great king' has more than hundred sheep, and has about twenty wives.

Our main source of food, the bison, were decreasing in number because of the invaders hunting them.

Because we did not have enough food, we sometimes had to kill our fortunes, our sheep.

We lived in that environment.

For the most of the year, a strong dry wind sweeps the lands and the freezing season is short. There were those who could not survive the harsh nomadic life, but even then we, as a family, supported each other and lived on.

I didn't inherit much from my parents and led a modest life, but I spent every day surrounded by my kind wife and my cute daughter.

However, then, an incident happened.

The chieftain demanded to hand my wife over.

My wife advised me to give up since the great king's orders are absolute.

He even proposed to give me dozens of sheep in exchange.

If I had that wealth, I could raise my daughter without many worries, and I can send her off with many sheep when she married.

However, such a future cannot be. I felt that the happiest life was one where I had my wife and my daughter.

That night, I told my wife that we are going out. She agreed with teary eyes. She must have been in pain, and she must have felt restless. I regretted that I should have made this decision earlier.

When I told my relatives, they denounced me, saying that running away was something a coward did.

That I had no right to be called a proud warrior.

However, even if it meant that I could be with my family, I felt no shame from being called a coward.

I considered fighting the king, but if I win his massive wealth and his twenty women would become mine. I didn't want that.

And if I lose, my daughter has to work as a servant to someone else for the rest of her life.

Of course, defeat would mean death, so I wouldn't be able to help.

Leaving was the best choice.

My pride as a warrior did not matter.

I only took seven sheep because taking more would hinder me. I loaded the luggage on the horse and sat my wife and daughter on top. I would just pull the reins from in front.

Finally, I snapped my spear, the symbol of a warrior. I was no longer a warrior. I was just a man cherishing his family.

Like so, our long journey started.

I lived off the land.

I hunted animals with a dagger. I fished when I arrived at watersides.

However, I could not hunt well from the beginning. I must reflect from becoming arrogant from hunting large cattle.

At first, I couldn't even hunt a small rabbit, that my family had to go hungry for some days.

However, my wife made some soup with dried meat, so we could endure.

The unending journey continued.

Then, since I had to cross the mountains, I auctioned off the horse at a village.

Now that we didn't have a horse, we were wandering around for real.

The snowstorm raged on. We spend our nights in dark and cold caves. But with my wife and my daughter, I somehow persevered.

Some time later, I could see how the wild animals moved.

I understood when they moved around, and how they ran. Once I understood that, it wasn't so hard to hunt.

I was happiest that I could fill the bellies my wife and my daughter with meat.

One day, we met with a certain foreign woman.

She was wearing clothes not from these parts.

That person seemed to be asking for help. I couldn't understand her words, but that's how it felt.

When I followed her, a man was sitting in the shade under a tree.

On closer look, he was unconscious and shivering, and his face was pale.

".....Rest easy. This is not a mortal disease."

"!?"

When I shook my head, the woman's face turned into an expression of despair. It seemed that my message wasn't conveyed. I looked at my wife and asked her to calm the woman down.

What drained the man's vitality was the high mountain. This place looks like a hill with a gentle slope, but the air thins the further one goes. It's a common landscape around these parts. This landscape causes many people like that man to suffer from the lack of air.

Thankfully, this is the highest point, so we just have to wait for his symptoms to recede and then take him down.

Once his condition improved, I carried him on my back and we descended the mountain.

It was a bit unstable since I couldn't get a proper grip on my knife, but my wife walked in front and stood watch. My daughter and the foreign woman were following well, closely behind us.

After we descended, the man's consciousness returned and his health improved.

Then, we started travelling with that couple.

The man was well-learned. He quickly understood our language and was able to communicate with us.

They were a couple on a journey from the snow country far away. We were in similar situations, so we found kindred spirits within each other.

Though, the difference is that their journey is not unending. They had a home to return to.

"Ah~ I see~"

The foreign man said in a somewhat drawling manner. When our conversation got deeper from alcohol, he put forth a surprising proposal.

"Then, come to our village. Okay?"

He first spoke in our language and spoke in his language to his wife for her approval.

"Oh, my, okay~! That's a great idea~. Since Ritchan is probably lonely~."

I didn't understand her words, but she also said something in a somewhat drawling manner. They might be a couple very like each other.

The unending journey concluded refreshingly.

I heard about the extreme cold of the lands we were brought to, but because I felt colder during our journey, I was unexpectedly unperturbed.

The new chieftain here was a young man.

The young man's name is Ritzhard Salonen Revontulet. He's shorter than my wife and felt untrustworthy for some reason.

Unlike his father, he couldn't understand us. I tried to teach him our language, but foreign languages are hard. He gave up quickly.

However, he actively tried to communicate to us with gestures.

Soon, we were able to have simple conversations just through gestures.

Hunting in this village is done with a strange metal thing. The young chieftain pointed at that and told me its name. I also learned how to use it and how to maintain it, but I just continued to hunt with a dagger.

Just that, there were many ferocious animals in this region.

Sadly, I did not meet any cows.

I offered hunted rabbits to the chieftain every day. He was being humble, but I thought that just one rabbit was too little a payment for a warm house.

My wife cooked in the house. The foreign cuisine she learned from the chieftain's mother were all tasty.

My daughter grew well, and started helping out with some light housework.

I wanted to gift the chieftain with a large beast for giving us this life. That desire grew stronger each day inside me.

One night, I found a large beast that I never saw before. It was a mysterious creature that walked on all fours, had brown fur, round ears, but had sharp claws and teeth.

After a long struggle, I somehow managed to be victorious.

When I returned, the chieftain was astonished. It was probably because I was covered in blood. Though most of the blood was the beast's.

Upon realising that, the chieftain looked terribly relieved. Then he looked as if he had an idea and then he went off somewhere.

He returned with a spear in his hand.

"Hey, I know that Teoporon is strong. Use this from now on."

"....."

The chieftain said something and held the spear out.

I threw away my pride as a warrior when I left the tribe. So I can't accept that.

Because I did not accept the spear, the chieftain looked troubled.

Then he tried to convey something with gestures, as always.

First, he pointed at me, flexed his muscles and nodded a few times.

I wonder if he wants to say that he approves of my hunting abilities.

Then he showed his index finger, meaning wife, and his middle finger, meaning daughter, then clenched his fist. Finally, he pounded his chest.

“So, are you trying to tell me to protect my family?”

The chieftain smiled and held the spear out.

Power to protect my family.

And also power to protect the kind young man.

He is telling me to use that power to help.

I felt resolute in a moment.

I accepted the spear.

“——Yes. Now, I acknowledge my master as the ‘great king’ and I shall set forth as a warrior with my spear!”

With feelings of gratitude, I pounded my chest, kneeled on one knee and received the spear.

Here, in these new lands, I became a warrior again, serving a new king.

“I’ll continue to be in your care, Teoporon!”

To the great king’s words, I pounded my chest in response.

Though they say these lands are a harsh and remote place, it was paradise for us.

With my wife and my daughter, we continued to live with the great king.

A few years after that, the king got a strong and valiant wife and came to be surrounded by many children, but that is a story for another time.

Chapter 50 - Miruporon's Activity Report

Our family lives in a village where white cold ice falls from the sky.

My work every day is to provide a comfortable environment for the 'great king'.

My father takes care of the prey the king caught and does the maintenance on the tools, and my mother cooks. I took care of the animals and chopped firewood. We split the household chores between mother and me.

On my holidays, I went out hunting. Father taught me how to use the bow.

Today, I caught a rabbit. It tastes good when it's skewered and cooked.

Since I had forgot to bring my leather bag, so I carried it by the neck.

I carefully treaded on the frozen path.

The passersby pretended to have not seen me. This was the usual, so I didn't mind it a single bit.

According to mother, it seems that the people in this village dislike foreigners. My parents' old homeland was also a closed society, unwelcoming of foreigners. It was probably the same thing.

However, the 'great king' and his queen are different. They greet us with a soft smile every day.

Still, there were exceptions in the village.

"Oi, giant woman, only one today!?"

This man, whom I did not even know the name of, talked to me every day.

White hair that glistens like snow, clear blue eyes and a clean white face. From far away, I can't distinguish him from the other villagers.

However, his scornful expression, his malevolent tone, and his eyes that pointed up as if to show his mean nature told me that it was him.

He was a head shorter than me, so I ended up gazing down at me. He turned red and yelled at me.

"You're just needless tall because you're eating bears!! Take a good look, I'll become much taller than you in the future!!"

Yet again, with a haughty attitude, he shouted something at me and ran off.

I returned home and prepared dinner.

Since freshly hunted meat is tough and hard to eat, I made soup and a skewer dish from the bear meat father hunted.

Bear meat has a strong smell. Therefore, we have to use powdered herbs to get rid of the smell.

After the sun set, my parents returned. The three of us ate together, had baths and then slept.

I led a similar life also on days I had work.

Then, change visited when I met one girl.

"Hey, you."

"?"

A short girl, from my perspective, talked to me. However, she was pretty tall for a girl from the village. She did not have other special traits, and had the usual white hair and blue eyes.

“You’re the person working at the lord’s place, right?”

“?”

“Could it be, that you still don’t know the language!?”

The girl said something to me, but I couldn’t understand anything.

“Come here!!”

“?”

I was called over to a small house.

She pulled up a chair and gestured for me to sit.

“I’m Aina.”

“?”

“Aina! Name!”

“Aina?”

“Yes!”

She pointed to herself and said Aina. ‘Aina’ might be her name.

Likewise, I pointed to myself and said, “Miruporon.”

“Hmm, so you’re called Miruporon.”

“.....?”

“Hey, Miruporon. You’re trying to learn the words here, right?”

“?”

From that day, my exchange with ‘Aina’ began.



Aina appeared stealthily and dragged me to her house.

Surprisingly, she was teaching me the language of this village.

“Hey, what are you making for dinner?”

“.....Meat.”

“Hah? Be more specific!”

“?”

I learned many words after some time, but I still couldn’t converse well. When Aina chatters away, it becomes impossible to pick up the words.

I didn’t tell the king and the queen that I was learning the language. I wanted to surprise them.

“Miruporon, thank you. You’re a great help.”

“!”

Now that I could understand his words, I understood that the ‘great king’ is a warm and kind person just as his appearance suggested.

“Miruporon, it’s late, so you can go back.”

I also understood the kind considerations of the queen

Since I could now understand the language, the number of times I felt touched by the words 'thank you' continued to increase.

I want to say 'thank you' quickly. However, I'm ashamed of my poor speech so far.

I started visiting the village more to meet Aina.

"Oi, giant woman, what are you happily skipping about for!"

"....."

Understanding the language was not all pleasurable.

I now also understood the harsh words that man threw at me.

"Looking forward getting picked up by a man or something? Well, it is the tourist season now."

"....."

"Unfortunately, no one wants such a large woman like you!"

"....."

I knew very well that I am inferior in comparison to other women. The women in this village are all small and lovely. They are always smiling, and seeing them heals the hearts. Men are having such women as wives.

I waited for that man to go away while holding on to the edge of my skirt. The vivid blue skirt I was wearing is made by Aina. It probably didn't fit well on me who did not have white skin. I felt sad and ugly, a level further.

“Oi, are you listening!?”

“!”

I flinched from having my shoulders grabbed.

Then, I had noticed.

That my eyes were locked with that man's.

“Ah!”

“Eh!?”

Because I suddenly let out a loud voice, the man's eye's went wide.

Come to think of it, it might be the first time speaking in front of him.

“What was that, you surprised me since you suddenly spoke!”

“You, height, will grow.”

“Ha!?”

“Tall, grow.”

“!”

The man took a few steps back.

It had been a few years since I met him. His first reaction was so refreshing.

I also had some frustration pent up from getting shouted at.

“Why, come, me, speak?”

“Sh-Shut up!”

“Reason, tell me.”

“Such a thing, that doesn’t matter!”

“Loud, voice, no.”

“It’s you who has a loud voice!”

“Not, you. Miruporon.”

“!”

Then I remembered that I didn’t know the man’s name yet.

“Name, tell me.”

“Who are you to look from above.”

“Look, From, Above, name?”

“Wrong!”

My counterattack began from that day.

When I found that man, I sneaked up to him.

“Find you!”

“What do you mean ‘find’!! It’s ‘found.’”

He angrily corrected my mistakes.

Because of such events, my language skills improved rapidly.



Today, I chopped firewood again.

I liked chopping wood.

The feeling of cleanly splitting wood with an axe gave me an indescribable pleasure.

Someone came up behind me while I was chopping firewood.

“Morning, Miruporon. You’re early again today.”

When I turned around, there was the kind king.

“Good morning,” the morning greeting. Our family lived without knowing that for a long time.

“Here, a reward.”

A warm bread was placed into my hand.

“I baked some because I had some free time. It’s got cheese in it. If you don’t mind, please~.”

“Th-Thank you.”

His wide blue eyes opened wide.

“Eh, Miruporon, just now, did you say thank you!?”

It seemed that my first “thank you” was delivered properly.



“Ah~ really!”

Aina threw the bow on the snow.

“This is impossible!”

“Everyone, starts, like this.”

“You’re lying!”

For the past few days, I helped out with Aina’s archery training.

She probably wants to surprise her family by hunting a small animal by herself.

She first taught me the language because she wanted to learn archery.

“Don’t worry, until, it’s good, I’ll come.”

“Of course you have to! We’re friends, right?”

“!”

‘Friend’. Aina was my first friend.

I found out some time later that I was also her first ‘friend’.

On another note, our relationship with the ‘great king’ changed slightly.

“Please accept this offering, a bear.”

“My lord, father says, this bear, is for you.”

“I see. Thank you, Teoporon.”

I could translate for them. Recently, father and mother also started putting in effort to learn the language.

The man who pestered me for many years, Luca, was not as he usually was.

“Luca, found you!”

“!?”

My counterattack is still continuing.

“D-Don’t surprise me like that!”

According to Aina, he was pestering me because he wanted to get my attention.

Once I knew that, his abusive language felt cute, and I did not mind it at all.

Thanks to Aina and Luca, my life was changing.

Every day is fun now.

Chapter 51 - Ritzhard's Lonely Years — First Half

Grandfather died.

He passed away when the sun did not set, when the forest shined the brightest, the favourite season of his.

Grandfather taught me how to make traditional handicrafts, how to hunt, how to butcher animals and taught me everything about being a lord. He said that he had no regrets and then left this world.

I really think that he tried his best for a really long time.

I laid him next to grandmother, so that he may rest in peace.

After that, every day was a struggle. Though I acting as the substitute because grandfather fell ill, it didn't mean that I could do everything perfectly.

After I was being chased by work for some months, my parents summoned me.

The bad feeling I had was spot-on.

Father said this.

—— It's getting a bit cold, so I'm going on an adventure to someplace warmer.

It wasn't surprising. Father always wanted to explore the world for a long time. He was finally free from grandfather who did not allow him to go on an adventure that left his family behind.

However, what surprised me was what mother said next.

—— I'm worried about dad so mum's going along.

Oh no, it's doubly destructive with the two of them.

How should I describe my parents? Aloof, or unworldly.

However, I thought that for my parents a more relaxing environment was better than this bleak town, so I didn't stop them.

Father prepared for the journey carefully, taking his time. Meanwhile, mother made other preparations, such as arranging a maid for the mansion.

Then, it was the day of their departure.

"Ritchan, sorry we had to go at such a tough time."

"It's alright. It's not like I expected anything from you anyways."

Even though I said something rude, Father relaxedly murmured, "Really? That's a relief." Mother too was all smiles.

"Oh, my, dear, Ritchan, look, it's pretty butterfly-san~"

".....Eh, uwah!?"

"?"

Seeing the butterfly float about, father let out a surprised voice.

"Th-That's the globally rare legendary butterfly, Helena Morpho!! Why is it here!?"

With that, father started chasing after the butterfly.

“My my, oh my~”

Mother flutteringly waved her hands and started running after father!?with a slow speed that one might doubt that was even running.

.....This feels enervating, somewhat.

My worrisome parents set off without much special warning.

I wanted to reassure them or something by talking about my position as the lord, but they went off in a very carefree manner without listening to my story.

In this manner, I began living alone.



It was my first year as a lord.

The first thing I wanted to do was to return the Spirit stone Siedi that grandfather removed back to the village square.

However, the stone is quite big, so I can't carry it by myself.

I considered getting someone else to help, but in this period all the villagers are desperate preparing for the polar nights so I couldn't talk to them.

In addition, I was also busy preparing for the polar nights. Mother made some preserved food in bottles, and I preserved some hunted meat in the snow. Since the maid won't be coming during the polar nights, I'll have to rely on the preserved food mother made.

Then, once the time that the sun was up grew shorter, I went around and checked if everyone had enough.

Well, I did sorta expect it, but the people are cold to me.

Because of my grandfather's reforms, my family is disliked by the villagers. There's also that I have foreign blood mixed in.

Anyway, the sun was setting, so I ended with that for the day.

On my way back. While I was walking down the snow-filled street, I heard the shrill cry of a chicken from behind me.

When I turned around, I saw a chicken desperately running away.

There was also a girl desperately chasing after it.

"S-Stop!! I told you to, stop!!"

"....."

Only thinking of the shortest distance, the chicken ran straight towards here. It was trying to go between my legs, so when it came close I seized it by its wings.

"Are you alright? Aina."

"....."

The girl breathed heavily, her shoulders moving up and down.

"Hey, is this, dinner?"

In the village, people eat the chicken before it becomes too cold to raise outside.

Just during the winter, the clucking sounds of chickens disappear from the village.

The caught chicken still had much vigour. The girl looked a little frightened.

“Could it have, run away?”

“.....T-Tag! We were playing that.”

“I see.”

“.....”

When I placed the chicken in the bag Aina had in her hand, she looked a bit tense because the chicken kept jumping about.

“Are you alright? What about the slaughtering?”

“.....”

Aina is six now. At this age, children start helping with slaughtering small animals.

Her eyes darted about from my question, so she might have been ordered to slaughter the chicken.

“Want to do it together?”

“Eh, r-really!?”

“Sure.”

Thus, I helped with slaughtering the chicken and returned when it was completely dark.

And for the first time, I hailed the polar nights (kaamos) alone.

Just until last year, we gathered together in one room, making traditional handicrafts, singing spirit songs (joik), spending the dark days merrily.

However, spending the polar nights alone was very depressing.

I also told the maid to not come during the polar nights. So I have to cook for myself.

The breads were buried en masse in the snow. Cooking started from excavating the breads from the snow.

It was the first time I cooked. Mother did all the cooking, and even when I was assigned tasks, they were just simple things such as finely chopping ingredients.

Today, I was making soup with reindeer meat and root vegetables.

I placed a pot of water on the fireplace-cum-stove and sliced the ingredients in.

Recalling what mother did, I put in some spices from the shelf too.

“.....?”

Somehow, a sticky soup was created. While wondering about it, I poured some into a wooden bowl.

As for the bread, I wrapped it paper and steamed it on the pot.

Warm bread and steaming soup.

I praised myself that I could do it if I put my mind to it.

After giving a prayer in thanks to the blessings of nature, I had a spoonful of soup.

——Mm, disgusting!!

My first soup was unfortunately not as delicious as I had expected.

I poured my passion and energy into improving my cooking during my first polar nights.

When the polar nights were over, I came to meet a surprising situation that my parents returned.

They were just here to visit. They dropped off a family from a martial race somewhere, briefly told me the circumstances then left again.

“H-Hello”

“.....”

“.....”

“.....”

The martial race family consisted of three members, the father, the mother and the daughter.

It seemed that they were also a nomadic race, and they were dressed in strange attire not seen in these parts.

Light brown skin, black hair and black eyes. They look valiant like lions..... all three of them. Father said that they had been wandering around for a long time, so maybe they became like that from their journey.

Their clothes were strange too.

What especially bothered me was the biggest person, the man named Teoporon.

In this cold, he did not have anything on top. He had trousers at the least, but the fabric was thin.

He had a large dagger, and he was barefoot, wearing no shoes. However, his feet showed no signs of freezing, so he should be fine.

Still, I was worried that he was barefoot, so I asked him if he was okay. To that, Teoporon gestured for me to touch the soles of his feet.

When I carefully touched them, the soles of his feet were rock-hard. I felt relieved at that.

The women weren't wearing thick clothes either. They were wearing brown clothes made out of animal hides, decorated with fringes. It was their traditional clothing. On the heads, they had colourful decorations, with some bird tail feather around their ears. They adorned their ears with feathers.

“N-Nice to meet you.”

“.....”

“.....”

“.....”

Like so, I suddenly started living with foreigners. I wanted to complain to my parents who brought this family over, but they were already gone.

We couldn't communicate, our lifestyle, culture, religion was all different.

We were very different people, but we got along mysteriously well.

Also, I was now able to do things I wasn't able to do alone.

I could return the heavy stone to the village with some help from Teoporon.

Though, the villagers criticised that I was feigning magnanimity. I gave up because they wouldn't listen no matter what I said.

I faced many problems, and desperately tried to solve them. From that, my first year as a lord passed by very quickly.

Chapter 52 - Ritzhard's Lonely Years — Second Half

Spring of my second year as a lord.

The villagers are still cold to me.

However, there were some small changes. I could now see elderly people placing offerings and making prayers at the Spirit Stone.

The busy days continued.

While I continued to do my work as a lord, I also had to do work to survive the snow country.

The herb picking in spring is important for gathering the necessary spices and herbs for the whole year, so I have to put a lot of effort into it.

I still had more work. I had to till the fields outside the village.

This was done by everyone in the village.

The harvested goods aren't distributed among the villages. Everything is sold and collected as tax.

Until a few years ago, the harvested vegetables were distributed among the villagers. Back then, tax was collected by one reindeer a year, but because of beasts the number of reindeers were reduced greatly.

The lord at the time, my grandfather, immediately stopped getting taxes through reindeers and got the taxes through selling vegetables.

Seventy reindeers from the village, and vegetables from barren land.

The difference is great.

However, reindeers are important for the village and for survival. Since their numbers had dwindled, we could not afford to haphazardly collect them.

Because of that, the farm work in spring is done by everyone in the village.

Of course, there are more fields.

Everyone tills their own fields to grow their own vegetables for winter.

When I returned home, the martial race lady was cooking.

Because the maid quit since she had to look after her newly born grandson, my new housemate was making them instead.

The martial race lady, Ruruporon, seems to have learnt cooking from mother, providing me with food that had similar flavour that I had when I was young.

Even so, I continued the research for improving my cooking skills.

I asked the shop lady for things I didn't know, and soon I became able to cook some moderately delicious things.

Summer. To try my hand at making jam and alcohol, I went out to pick berries.

For the method of jam making, I learnt it from the village ladies when I helped out with making fabric. For the method of alcohol making, I got it from the notes in grandfather's library.

On the way to my berry picking, I saw some ladies so I approached them to hear what might be good for making jam today, but there was a chilly atmosphere.

They all then remembered something and left.

When I asked what it was to the few remaining ladies, it seemed that they were discussing who picked the most berries.

It seems that they were betting that Mrs Aria will win.

It is said that women who can pick berries well make good wives. Berry picking is that important for the villagers.

“It seems that Your Lordship ended up winning today.”

“Uwah, that’s a bit.....”

It seemed that I came late, didn’t read the mood and ended up winning. I apologised and awkwardly made a thin smile.

“Isn’t it great, my lord. You’ll be very popular.”

“H-How nice.”

“.....”

To avoid the ladies’ cold gazes, I quickly left.

Autumn was the season of fruition. I gathered mushrooms and berries from the forest, while the fish in the rivers and the lakes fattened up, that they became tasty.

The prohibition on bird hunting was lifted as well, so I was busier in autumn than I was in summer.

When it became winter, I started preparing for the polar nights.

Then when it began I laboured at crafting.

Like so, my second year passed by in a flash.

I spent my third year mundanely as well.

Change came in my third time of the polar nights. I couldn’t get motivated, nor could I make progress on crafting.

I had the tools in my hands, but I ended up wasting the time away.

When the long polar nights ended, I finally realised. I was lonely.

For the first and second year, I was desperate trying to catch up with work, so I had no leisure to feel lonely.

I thought I had to make new family.

In my fourth year, I went to my grandfather's country to attend the ball.

It seemed that there were balls in my country as well, but I was never invited.

It is just said that House Revontulet will never be invited because of something an ancestor did.

When I sent a letter stating that I was going to attend the ball, grandfather kindly sent some dress suits. I was thankful for that.

The lord leaving the village might be irresponsible, but I couldn't marry with a woman from the village who have low birth rates. Plus, the girl close to my age was a close relative even.

As a count, I needed an heir. Thus, with that obligation, I went overseas while leaving the village to people around my age.

Like so, I arrived in the foreign country before the sea froze.

It's been a decade since I met my foreign grandfather. That was when he came over across the sea with father. By the way, mother was told to leave the country by grandfather. In retrospect, I think it was to force her to return to the village.

Grandfather had thinned a bit, but he was healthy, as ever.

"Really, to not show up for a decade?"

“I’m sorry.”

I could only apologise.

My grandfather back home did not allow me to go overseas.

“Well, it’s fine.”

“.....Yes.”

“So, your objective is to find a marriage part.”

“Yes.”

“Hmm.”

Grandfather suggested having a marriage interview with one woman he thought would be good. So I agreed and asked him to do so.

The day of the marriage interview.

My hair was combed and tied into one knot behind my head, instead of the usual braid. Most men in this country have their hair cut, so apparently there weren’t any men with long hair like mine.

“The best you can do is to take advantage of your face that resembles your mother’s.”

“.....Yes, sir.”

I never thought deeply about it, but according to grandfather it seems that I am handsome. The people from my remote lands were all like this so I never thought of it this way.

I’ll take advantage of this as something limited only to the limited lands.

Grandfather introduced me to a lady from a prestigious house.

“——So, we have these polar nights where the sun doesn’t rise for about two months.”

“.....”

For some reason, I was rejected that day.

“Of course. What kind of woman would want to be married off to a poor noble in the arctics!”

“.....”

Grandfather said to silently accept the results. Was that really okay? I tilted my head.

That year, my search for a marriage partner ended there.

I went overseas again on the fifth year.

The fourth polar nights alone was really terrible, very depressing. So, I followed grandfather's orders to take back a woman who already agreed to a marriage.

Well, anyone might guess what would happen if a woman was suddenly taken to a self-sufficient village.

Some time afterwards, I had received the infamous nickname of 'the Yeti of the Borderlands'.



“.....Well, I was this kind of scum.”

“.....”

As I told Sieg about the past ten years as a lord, for some reason I was sort of confessing my sins.

The long polar nights make people depressed. It's probably because there's no sunlight.

Though I was out of choices, but in retrospect it really wasn't something I should have done as a person.

Now I knew. Loneliness drives people mad.

However, because I felt that I shouldn't repeat the same mistakes, I told everything about the village to Sieg. My explanation back then might have been a really sloppy one though, for her to agree to such an unreasonable marriage to such a crafty person.

However, Sieg is here.

She said that she will become my wife.

This was a miraculous story, if nothing else.

"I didn't know."

Sieg suddenly murmured.

She must have been uncomfortable. I was talking about haphazardly finding a woman for marriage.

"I should have told you sooner, right. Erm, sorry."

"Indeed. Why didn't you tell me sooner."

"....."

My chest tightened from her reproachful words.

"I'm really sorry that I was insincere."

"Insincere? What are you talking about?"

"Eh?"

“What I wanted you to have told me sooner was the story about you becoming depressed in the polar nights.”

“!?”

Sieg said that the story about women wasn't interesting, and also said that the story didn't worry her too much.

“I also took advantage of this marriage. I'm in no position to criticise you.”

“Sieglinde, but,”

“I told you to not worry.But to think that you were cornered that badly, I should have become your true wife sooner.”

“Yes. Thank you.”

“I had no confidence as a woman. I thought that Ritz might regret choosing me as a marriage partner, so I thought I shouldn't accept it so quickly.”

The truth was finally revealed.

But that might have been why it was good.

While I spent time with Sieg, I think I slowly regained myself. I finally managed to say farewell to a depressed me that I had been wrestling with for a decade.

“So, you see, don't degrade yourself.”

“.....”

“I know that Ritz is a sincere person.”

But the blunders I made yesterday don't disappear. I have to reflect.

Maybe to change the dark atmosphere, Sieg smiled briefly and turned into a serious expression as she started talking.

“There’s a fairytale that I read when I was little.”

“?”

For some reason, she suddenly started talking about a fairytale.

“The Snow Fairy of Happiness.”

Long time ago, far far away, there was a village that snowed all year round.

The village was a strange one, where a fairy lived as well.

The fairy lived together with the villagers for a long time.

When there were blizzards that prevented the villagers from going outside, the fairy delivered food to the villagers.

The happiness of the villagers was the happiness of the fairy.

One day, the blizzard did not stop for many days.

The villagers wished to the snow fairy for bright sunlight to shine down on the village.

The snow fairy brought strong sunlight to grant the wishes of the villagers.

The sun melted all the snow in the village, and the villagers rejoiced at their first coming of spring.

They held a festival for three days, but then the villagers noticed something.

“Where did the snow fairy go?”

The villagers searched hard, but they could not find the snow fairy.

The village grieved, but something happened.

One day, the villagers discovered it. The clothes the snow fairy was wearing.

It was something a woman of this village had made. It was small, fitting only for the snow fairy.

Then, the villagers realised it.

That the snow fairy disappeared with the snow.

The festive village fell silent.

They could not regain something that is already lost.

The snow fairy was already gone, they could not wish for it to come back.

From that day on, the villagers went far out to the mountains.

On that mountain, there was a lake that was frozen all year round, and the villagers took some ice and offered it to the snow fairy.

People hoped that the snow fairy might appear again, so they kept offering ice.

Then, a century later, the strong sunlight turned into a normal one, and snow started falling again.

The villagers celebrated the days when it snowed, and passed on the story of the snow fairy which had now become a legend.

There was something that watched over such a village.

It could not do anything, but it wished for the happiness of the villagers every day.

It is said that something invisible to people silently watched over the village.

“.....or so it goes.”

“Hehh, that’s the first time I heard it.”

“It might be a fairytale only in my country.”

“How unfortunate.”

“So.....”

“?”

Sieg hesitantly said it. That I was like the fairy in that story.

“When I first saw you, I was surprised because I thought you were the snow fairy.”

“Fairy!? Not a Yeti!?”

“Aa. Without a doubt.”

“A man turning thirty is a fairy!?”

“A fairy.”

No, it’s not possible. I denied it, but Sieg insisted that I was similar.

“But then, weren’t you surprised when you came here?”

“Aa. This is a village of fairies.”

As to why she started talking about that, she was worried that I might disappear like the snow fairy from overworking.

“It’s alright. But, it’s a coincidence.”

“What is?”

“During the polar nights, I found the sun.”

“?”

As she looked puzzled, I caressed her hair with my fingers.

“I wonder if the sun is coloured like this?”

“!?”

I said that and kissed the hair that had the colour of the sun.

“See, I didn’t melt.”

“.....”

Sieg looked extremely troubled.

I only recently found out that this face was her embarrassed expression.

I held her shoulders and kissed her on the lips.

I thought I was going to melt from just touching her, but thinking that it was in a different sense of the word, I focused on the act.

The sun from overseas enveloped me in a warm light.

I could not be happier.